

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

024
Secure

MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

U. S. Department of Agriculture

A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

Issue #60
May 2, 1977

PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS.....James C. Webster has been appointed Director, Congressional and Public Affairs. Sidney J. Butler has been appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer Affairs. Edmund L. Nichols has been appointed Confidential Assistant to the Deputy Secretary. (Contact: Phyllis Mowery, OP, ext. 77131)

SELECTIVE PLACEMENT PROGRAM.....On April 12, representatives of the Disability Rights Center, Inc., met with the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Pat Killen, USDA Coordinator for Selective Placement to discuss the Department's affirmative action program for physically handicapped individuals. The Disability Rights Center, Inc., is a non-profit national clearinghouse and research center on civil rights legislation affecting the disabled. In the next few weeks, representatives will be studying progress made by the Department in carrying out an affirmative action program to employ disabled persons. They will be meeting with employees of the Food and Nutrition Service and possibly one or more other agencies. Agencies are urged to cooperate with representatives of the Center and the Department Coordinator in providing information on employment, promotion, training, architectural barriers, and other areas relating to the program. At the present time, the Department has a total of 1,996 physically handicapped employees on the rolls. (Contact: Pat Killen, OP, ext. 75625)

SAFETY AND HEALTH PROGRAMS.....The Task Force on USDA Safety and Health Management carried out their review from December 1976 through March 1977. This task force was established by the Assistant Secretary for Administration in response to a GAO report which was highly critical of USDA's Safety and Health Programs.

The Task force report, provided to the Assistant Secretary in March, recommends that visible evidence of strong affirmative support for the Safety and Health Programs be initiated from "top management" of the Department and Agencies. This support would be formulated in the issuance of a Numbered Secretary's Memorandum redefining the USDA Safety and Health Programs and the issuance of Delegations of Authority for Safety and Health.

The recommendations have been provided to Management Council members for comment. (Contact: Phillip R. Mueller, OP, ext. 78248)

NO SPRING ADP A-11 REQUIRED.....ADS has received notice from the Office of Management and Budget advising that the normal comprehensive Spring plan for ADP (A-11) will not be required this year. (Contact: Hank Meetze, ADS, ext. 76275)

PHOTOCOMPOSITION SYSTEM.....The USDA central photocomposition operation has been reviewed and specifications for an upgraded system have been developed. The proposed upgraded central photocomposition system specifications and cost justification are being reviewed by GPO to assure that the configuration is sound and meets Departmental and Joint Committee on Printing requirements. The implementation schedule calls for final installation and testing in January or February of 1978.

The system will provide galleys and fully composed camera copy for most agency publications. Text and table input into the system can be made by paper and magnetic tape, optical character readable copy, and manuscript for key-boarding. The system will operate under the Working Capital Fund and will be under the Office of Operations Printing Services Division. (Contact: Ron Dixon, 00, ext. 77373)

RECOMMENDED CANCELLATION OF PROPOSED MASTER AGREEMENT CONSULTANT CONTRACT SYSTEM.....The master agreement would have pre-qualified firms competing for USDA work, thus reducing the time and effort required to begin work on a project. The proposal to drop the project results from a drop in the number of USDA consulting contracts which would be covered by the process from an estimated 30-plus two years ago, to approximately 10 today. 00 estimates the cost of developing/maintaining a unique procurement system for this small volume of contracts would not be cost effective. Proposal has been circulated to Management Council for discussion. (Contact: Dean Smith, 00, ext. 77527)

SUSPENSION OF CONTRACTOR.....Pending debarment, Clark's Aerial Service, Inc., has been suspended from doing business with USDA. Clark's was convicted of making false statements that defrauded the government of more than \$1.5 million under the 1973 Upland Cotton Allotment program. The owner, who was previously involved in an antitrust action involving APHIS, ARS and FS contracts, was fined \$190,000 and sentenced to 6 years imprisonment. (Contact: Tony Cooch, 00, ext. 77527)

GSI CAFETERIA OPERATIONS.....

...Price Increase - GSA authorized GSI to increase prices on a "tier basis" using three levels. For USDA this resulted in a 5% increase effective April 25.

...Contract Negotiations - GSA has not yet renegotiated the existing contract but is continuing efforts to reach a solution with GSI. (Contact: Al Cauley, 00, ext. 72815)

METRICATION GUIDELINES.....Guidelines detailing USDA policy on metrication are now being prepared for inclusion in the Administrative Regulations. Agencies will be provided with an opportunity to comment on a draft copy prior to inclusion in the AR's. (Contact: Robert Owen, FAS, ext. 75531)

PROGRAM FOR SENIOR MANAGERS IN GOVERNMENT.....An intensive three-week course designed for experienced executives who hold positions of major responsibility in the public sector is being jointly sponsored by the Harvard Business School and the Kennedy School of Government. This program addresses the roles, tasks, and skills of senior managers. Participants will scrutinize a wide range of institutions in the Federal, State and local sectors, examining how they operate; their financing and budgeting constraints; their peculiarities of manning and organization. (Contact: John Kizler, OP, ext. 76977)

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES LAG.....Eight of the largest USDA agencies have been sent letter reports on the results of OA's audits of their EEO program efforts since 1973. This is a followup to a similar audit in 1972 and the results of the audits are being summarized in a report for the Assistant Secretary for Administration who serves as the Director of EEO. Some highlights:

- ...Employment of minorities and women in USDA has increased minimally over the past three years despite increased recruitment and hiring efforts.
- ...Communication of EEO principles and concepts needs to be enhanced to increase employee understanding, acceptance and participation in the various aspects of the program. (Contact: Bill Montoney, OA, ext.76943)

GAO REVIEWS OA.....The General Accounting Office is doing a review of the Office of Audit. Among the items they are looking at are 1) the Audit files from inception of a survey through field work, work papers, final audit report and agency action taken on the Audit, and 2) OA efforts to encourage and expand use of State/local government audit coverage of USDA programs. GAO's review will cover OA Headquarters as well as selected Regional Offices. (Contact: D. F. Reynolds, OA, ext. 74547)

ENERGY TASK FORCE.....Program officials from all agencies attended the first meeting of the Departmental Energy Task Force on April 13. This meeting was chaired by Ed Nichols, Office of the Deputy Secretary. The purpose of the meeting was to determine what is now being done by agencies in the area of energy conservation and what could be done in the future. Emphasis of the group will be directed toward research efforts to improve conservation on the farm and in rural communities. (Contact: Ed Nichols, SEC, ext. 76643)

DPA FOR KANSAS CITY COMPUTER CENTER.....The Department has received a Delegation of Procurement Authority (DPA) from GSA for competitively procuring equipment at the KCCC. ADS expects to provide vendors with a copy of the Request for Proposal by May 5. (Contact: Raymond Long, ADS, ext. 76265)

NATIONAL FINANCE CENTER NEWS.....

...Collection of Excessive Travel Advances - Approximately \$115,000 in excessive travel advances that were not certified as necessary have been deducted from 404 employees in pay period 7. This action is a direct result of demand letters sent to 3,508 employees showing excessive amounts of \$2,123,118.

...Document Volume Increase - The first half of FY 1977 showed a significant increase in the number of documents received and processed. Administrative payments increased by 37% due primarily to the implementation of the AD-838 Purchase Order Payment Systems. Billings and collections activity increased by 9% due to growth in the Federal Grain Inspection Program.

...Billing for Unused Airline Tickets - A representative of the Fiscal Management Branch met with GSA to discuss the automation of procedures for billing back to the airlines any unused tickets. Tentative approval was granted by GSA, however, implementation will be deferred until all affected carriers are notified.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE INVOICES.....Approximately 49% of the \$544,000 October 27, 1976, balance of outstanding invoices (61 days or older) have been paid by the agencies as of February 22. Information received from agencies indicates additional payments made to GPO were in transit as of February 22.

Agencies have provided excellent staff cooperation and have made a timely response in reducing these invoices. (Contact: Leo Palensky, OMF, ext. 77251)

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS.....The Congress has completed action on the 1977 Supplemental Appropriations Act. It will now be sent to the President for signature. This bill contains \$2,094,237,000 for USDA programs and pay costs. (Contact: Bob Barham, OMF, ext. 76176)

MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.....FNS presented an overview of their total Management Improvement Project to the Assistant Secretary for Administration and representatives from OMF and ADS on March 25. This meeting covered the preliminary effort underway on financial management information and a management appraisal. FNS initiated these efforts in June 1976, and anticipates granting a contract for the development of the financial management information project system by July. (Contact: Earl Hunigan, FNS, ext. 73388)

MINORITY BANK DEPOSIT PROGRAM.....The Special Programs Committee of the Inter-agency Council for Minority Business Enterprise, chaired by the Assistant Secretary for Administration, has launched a campaign to increase deposits in minority-owned banks. As a result of these efforts, the USDA Graduate School recently invested \$10,000 in a local minority bank. This investment will earn 6% interest on a one year certificate of deposit. (Contact: J. Fred King, OE0, ext. 77117)